

found inspiration in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, whose life we recall this year on the 40th anniversary of his death. We believed, to borrow Dr. King's immortal phrase, that we would be able to transform the jangling discords into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. His dream, born of America but heard by the whole world, inspired us through its unanswerable commitment to justice and to non-violence. We discovered that peace can be found without suspending your moral judgment, without sacrificing your identity and without surrendering your most deeply held political aspirations.

Today, as I stand before you in this great democratic assembly, I struggle to convey the enormous good that was done by so many people in my country, with your help. Do not underestimate the good that you have done. Do not forget the legacy that you have forged. And if ever you doubt America's place in the world, or hesitate about your power to influence events for the better, look to Ireland. Look to the good you have done. Look at the richness of so many individual futures that now stretch out before us for generations, no longer subject to conflict and violence. Look to the hope and confidence that we now feel on our island. The healing of history. Look and be glad.

Madam Speaker, there is, of course, no ending to history. We will always have new problems, new challenges and new opportunities. We are seeing an ever-increasing range of new technological and scientific developments, which are created and diffused at ever-greater speeds. Our societies are increasingly diverse. Side by side with great wealth and prosperity, we still see social exclusion and poverty. We endeavor to help families and communities ravaged by a minority who engage in crime or deal in drugs. We strive to deliver quality, affordable health care to all our people. We want the best education for our children. We seek to provide social protection and security for our older people, to recognize what they have given to help create our successful societies.

These are the challenges for modern Ireland, just as they are throughout America and across the developed world. These are the very essence of politics. That is why, with all our faults as human beings, we seek the honor of representing the people. We believe that diversity does not have to mean fragmentation or discord. We believe that wealth and prosperity does not have to be accompanied by poverty and inequality. We believe that evil or injustice need not—and will not—triumph. We believe—we insist—that all that is good and just is also possible. We believe in our republics and our forms of government, in which the sovereign power resides in the whole body of the people, and is exercised by representatives elected by the people.

An American President once said: "The supreme purpose of history is a

better world." Making a better world is also the supreme purpose of representative politics in our two democratic republics.

Madam Speaker, I will shortly step down from the office of Taoiseach after almost 11 years. I am honored to have been elected by the Irish people to serve them in that great office. Tomorrow, as I journey home to Ireland for the last time as Taoiseach, I will travel to the great city of Boston, Massachusetts. There, I will join my great friend, Senator Edward Kennedy, and pay tribute to President Kennedy and to Robert Kennedy—great Irishmen, great Americans and great leaders. In doing so, I will pay fitting tribute to all the Irish in America.

On the 6th of May, Madam Speaker, I will go to that famous field on the banks of the River Boyne in Ireland where, over three centuries ago, fierce and awful battle was waged between the Protestant King William and the Catholic King James. It was not just an Irish battle. It was part of a wider European struggle of power, of politics and of religion. For centuries after, the two sides on that field remained apart and remained divided. Today, both sides, proud of their history and confident of their identity, can come together in peace and part in harmony. They can offer each other the open hand of friendship. They will reaffirm again what Ireland has achieved and what we know in our hearts to be true. Centuries of war, of strife and of struggle are over, and over for good. The field of slaughter is now a meeting place of mutual understanding. Our children will live in peace. And their children will enjoy the fruits of their inheritance. This is the triumph of people and of politics. This is the achievement of democracy. The great achievement of Ireland and the great blessing of peace.

On that same day, I will go to the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese—a woman who rose from the conflict-torn streets of Belfast to be elected our head of state and our first citizen. I will offer her my resignation as Taoiseach. I will humbly hand over the seal of office which I have so proudly held. Finally, on the morning after, in the hours before my worthy successor steps forward to stand in my stead, I will stand silently at the simple graves of the patriot dead who proclaimed Ireland's republic and who fought for Ireland's freedom at Easter 1916. There I will discharge my last duty as Taoiseach and pay the homage that Ireland owes to those men and those women. And I will recall the words of the 1916 Proclamation, so resonant of the United States Declaration of Independence and so relevant to humanity around the world:

The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally.

These are the values on which Ireland stands. These are the values by which I strive to live. The vindication of these universal values is the highest tribute we can pay to those who have gone before and the greatest legacy that we can bequeath for those who are yet to come. There are no finer words with which to finish and upon which to say:

In history, in politics and in life, there are no ends, only new beginnings. So let us begin.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

Thank you for the opportunity.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

At 11 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m., His Excellency Bertie Ahern, the Prime Minister of Ireland, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Majority Floor Services Chief escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The Members of the President's Cabinet;

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

#### JOINT MEETING DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The purpose of the joint meeting having been completed, the Chair declares the joint meeting of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 11 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The House will continue in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1215

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR) at 12 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.

#### PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 one-minutes on each side.